

# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

## Notes from Committee Meeting

29 October 2015

Community Center

Incorporated Comments from 9 Dec. 2015 Meeting

### In Attendance

#### Committee & Staff

Debbie Driscoll Davis  
Craig Wilson  
Tom Hibschan  
Chris DiMatteo  
Nancy Colbert Puff  
Rebecca Spitko  
Russell White  
Tom Emerson

#### Consultant Team

Daphne Politis  
Martha Lyon  
Jeff Maxtutis  
Judi Barrett  
Eric Halvorsen  
Brian Beckenbaugh

### What would need to happen so that you could consider the Plan a successful endeavor?

- *Stakeholders get heard clearly; If everyone feels heard*
- *A clear long term vision that leads to a strategic plan*
- *How to continue to have slow, organic growth (smart, slow, integrated into current fabric, thoughtfully and beautifully)*
- *If it results in a clear set of directions*
- *That it results in enough base support in the community so that it can be carried through to implementation*
- *Lay out the process clearly and in advance*
- *Council needs to be involved early on, Russell White is the Council liaison on the Committee*
- *Integrate previous work of the Committee: The Committee worked hard for 4 years on gathering background data in certain areas and on carefully wording the Goals and Policies*
- *Keeps "rural" character*

# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

## Key issues in Town

- *Canyon-ization of Rt. 103, loss of views*
- *Future of the Navy Yard*
- *The impacts of climate change on the outlets*
- *Do we need workforce housing? Will this only benefit Portsmouth?*
- *Outlets need help to continue their viability in the future, How can we get the outlets involved?*
- *Increasing number of retired people living in town*
- *PILOT payments from Navy Yard and related housing*
- *Flood plain concerns – long-term, coordinated plans are not in place for the future effects of climate change*
- *Concern about Shipyard (may be underwater in the future)*
- *How to preserve the mix of incomes*
- *How to protect the rural areas (e.g. some big landowners had ideas regarding sub-dividing their properties in the long run to pay for college, etc.)*
- *Consistent enforcement of codes is an issue: it needs to be re-written*
  - *the code is hard to read and interpret correctly*
  - *there are only a small amount of people doing the enforcing*
  - *there is no table of dimensional controls with footnotes (would be helpful)*
  - *DPW was not following best practices*
  - *the lack of consistent enforcement then bleeds into conversations regarding other regulatory issues (as people then don't trust the fair enforcement of regulations in general)*
- *How to deal with Ship Yard traffic*
- *Lack of a newspaper means poor communication among residents*
- *Over 50% of tax dollars go to schools*
- *Perception that the changes in Portsmouth are creating waves of change in Kittery (people being priced out of Portsmouth)*
- *Clean up hotels on Route 1 By-pass*
- *Sustainability*
  - *getting to 0 carbon footprint (environmental sustainability)*
  - *Having an adequate tax base to support needed/desired services (social sustainability)*
  - *Economic*
- *Zoning for the area where the mall ends to the York line*
- *The previous comp plan was created before Google, Twitter and Facebook -- the new plan needs to incorporate/address technology.*

# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

## Features to preserve/enhance

- *Preserve Kittery, most people like the recent changes (e.g. Foreside) and the pace at which the changes are being made*
- *Contrast between wildlife and outlets*
- *Develop/redevelop with artistic taste*
- *Keep rural character (distinguishes the town from Portsmouth and York)*
- *Maintain pristine quality of harbor area*
- *Foreside*
- *Wildlife Refuge is the most pristine in the State (Rachael Carson)*
- *Gateway to Maine*
- *Seapoint Beach: very special*
- *Agriculture*
  - *2 working farms; CSA and Johnson's farms*
  - *organic farming movement in Maine*
  - *Farmer's Market on Sundays in Post Office parking lot (over 30 vendors, Debbie donates the land, strong Farmer's Market in Portsmouth)*
  - *Hoping for winter farmer's market in the future*
- *Brave Boat Harbor [Headwaters](#)*
- *[A very good place to live \(including good community facilities, tremendous food culture, excellent retirement facilities\)](#)*
- *[Preserve historic resources](#)*
- *[Kittery Land Trust, "Mt. Agamentikus to the Sea" \(located in York but draining into Kittery\)– regional land preservation and wildlife corridor, drainage efforts. Kittery participates \(Kittery Water District owns land and water there\).](#)*

## Features to improve/change

- *Need for public transportation*
  - *Scattered sites (e.g. Community Center, Kittery Estates, York County, York Hospital, etc.): Regional collaboration? Form a consortium?*
  - *Shuttle for those who can't drive*
- *Traffic too fast on Rt. 1*
- *Clean up hotels on Rt. 1 By-pass (e.g. buy hotel and convert to workforce housing)*
- *Business Park on Dennett Road (now zoning is wide open, may regret later)*
- *Don't allow outlets to extend commercial activity behind their existing footprints*

# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

- *Cluster vs. sub-division; need to make changes to the cluster provisions so that it is more in keeping with rural character*
- *Affordable housing:*
  - *Those who work at the outlets cannot afford to live in Kittery -people commute from Rochester*
  - *J-1 foreign student visas who work in the summer at the Ramada Inn, Bob's Clam Hut, etc. cannot afford housing in Kittery. The University of New Hampshire is 20 minutes away (perhaps dormitories there could be used by these seasonal young residents).*
  - *People who work at the Shipyard could probably afford to live in Kittery, but many choose to live in more rural areas*
  - *People live in Motels on By-pass and in several trailer parks*
- *Make sewer pumping stations look nicer*
- *Spruce Creek Association – Creek divides the town, drainage and clean up*
- *Area north of Rt. 1 (where Mall development ends to the York line), TIF district, water district serves portion of York, new restaurants, air adventure park, an odd patchwork amalgam of uses, the Economic Development Committee is looking at the area – what should be located here? How should it be zoned? How should traffic be dealt with?*

## **What else do you think we need to know about Kittery and Kitterians?**

- *Generally speaking, most people agree about what they like about Kittery and there is a good amount of consensus regarding a desire to have a moderate amount of growth that we like*
- *People gather in tribes and it is hard to get a true story*
- *Need to increase pride among residents (lose the negative feelings, some people think the Town is anti-growth, e.g. "Why can't I do whatever I want with my property?" and "Too much money is being spent on the schools" Get the message across that "what I do, affects the community as a whole."*
- *Very few people vote, a struggle to get them involved.*
- *People think they are living in a "rural area," that is really suburban*
- *Extremes in town: contradictions and interests*
- *It is hard to get people out and to sustain their interest*
- *Portsmouth is a force to be taken into account*
  - *Kittery's real estate market is not as strong as Portsmouth's*

# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

- *Kittery school system had a bad reputation (perhaps due to the Ship Yard children that were transient); this was about 10 years ago, since then performance on "Odyssey of the Mind" - has won statewide recognition*
- *Half of the town is under the age of 44, they do not read the newspaper, watch TV, or use a land line telephone. Need to reach this demographic.*
- *Shapleigh School was supposed to be a communication hub for the Town for broad band (high speed); the Town's generator is there. Exploring Town-sponsored high speed internet. There are some places in Town that do not have coverage.*

## **What could the previous Comprehensive Plan have done better?**

- *One of the major pitfalls of the previous Plan is that there wasn't enough engagement*
- *The plan lacked focus – it lacked prioritization and was too general*
- *Need to align with and influence zoning*
- *Tried to take too much property "out of play"*
- *The previous Plan took 2 years to be adopted, Town Council needed to be involved earlier in the process*
- *New growth took place in locations where the previous Comp Plan said it shouldn't.*
- *The plan made people in Town happy, but it didn't provide good direction for implementation*

## **TOWN TOUR: SPECIFIC LOCATIONS**

**Water District Offices, Rt. 1** – would move their offices if they could find another site, thus freeing up a good development site

**Former Wentworth Dennett's School:** artist community

**John Paul Jones Park:** WWI memorial

**Badger's Island;** zoning made 75 feet maritime industrial so all residential now there are non-conforming

**Foreside:** one mixed use zone, 3 free parking spaces for every business that opens there (given parking exemption). In the future parking may become more of an issue.

# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

**Kittery Center Village:** if Foreside is the “downtown,” what role does the Center Village play? Located close to the Community Center

**Former Community Center:** behind it is a wet area. Plan is to build out 2 small soccer fields and 2 tennis courts, lacrosse, and walking path around

## **Navy Yard**

- Has tennis courts, but are always locked
- Cannot access recreational facilities because of security
- As the Yard privatizes in the future, what does it mean about access?
- The site is architecturally beautiful, but the site is contaminated
- Federal government pays nothing for traffic impacts
- Navy housing at Admiralty Hill: they make PILOT payments (for all public services, except for schools)

## **Waterfront**

- recent court case regarding the definition of private property at low tide
- “historic ways to the water”: re-establishing right of way; Town needs to take an active role in maintaining and landscaping

## **Kittery Point**

- Highest priced home located here (Howell family)
- Fort McClary State Park
- Fort Foster – Town-owned, 84 acres
- Bray House: oldest house in ME, owners will make into a complex

## **Islands**

- Badgers
- Gerrish
- Cutts
- Appledore
- Cornell/UNH Marine Labs (7 miles off the coast)

## **Chauncey Creek**

- Chauncey [Pier](#) Creek Lobster restaurant, open only in summer, parking issues

## **Gerrish Island**

- Turn right: Fort Foster

# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

- Turn left: private road
  - Fire Chief concerned about branches, fire hazard
  - ME Coastal areas are in Trust Conservation Land
  - Highest zoning in Kittery: 2 acre lots
  - Tower Road: initially broken up into tiny lots, as a result many public ways to the water, but Tower itself is a private road
  - Rachel Carson Wildlife Preserve: fish and wildlife
  - Seapoint Beach: popular for dog walking, parking issues

## **Brave Boat Harbor Road**

- Safford School: 1 room school-house, town-owned, roof is leaking, new roof this month
- Railroad Right-of-way: cross country ski trail, some people bought sections of it
- Brave Boat Harbor land: cluster development – not successful

## **Route 1**

- New Hampton Inn proposed (currently in court)
- Outlets developed in the 1980s
- Outlet Association – meet regularly
- Signage is an issue

**Seward Farm:** possible soccer fields, backs up to [Rustle Wood Farm](#)

**Good to Go:** dehydrated food for camping, very successful/expanding local business

**Highway Rest Area:** accessed from Town

**Take Flight** – regional recreation – high ropes

**York Condos** – agreement to bring Kittery sewage

## **North of Haley Road**

- underutilized
- developable land/buildings – ripe for redevelopment

## **Next to Yankee Commons (trailer park)**

- 35-acres owned by Canadian corporation
- may give to Town for conservation land and trails

## **West of I-95**

- Betty Welch

# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

- 25 units, cluster development
- combined septic
- a lot of wetlands on both sides of the road

## **Business Park:** zoned as such

- all wooded
- no access onto 236
- TIF district
- Multiple property owners
- Now it has sewer, needs water and electricity
- Zoning has specific vision : village cluster form

## **Demographics**

- Most residents have English, Irish and Scottish background
- Churches: Baptist, Catholic, Congregational, [Jehovah Witness \(Dennett Rd.\)](#)
- More retired people living in Town, aging population

## **Housing**

- Cluster is now mandatory
- **Lewis Farms Conservancy**
  - Conserve trees, work with topography
  - Dual service septic systems
  - One of the first cluster subdivisions developed
  - 40 units, 140 acres, walking trails
- **Lynch Lane-**
  - 1990's subdivision, sprawl suburban development
  - isolated from the community; people don't integrate with the rest of the Town
- 2 Rooming Houses (SRO), one in Foreside
- Mobile Home Parks ([5 in total](#))<sup>1</sup>
  - Yankee Commons – trailer park, wants to expand
  - Yankee Green – higher density mobile home park
- Woodland Commons: subsidized housing, some Section 8
- Navy housing at Admiralty Village: they make PILOT payments (for all public services, except for schools)
- People live in Motels
- Litson Villas: long-term rental cabins/cottage apartments

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<sup>1</sup> [According to Committee member, Maine has one of the most stringent laws regarding mobile homes with very little local control.](#)



# KITTERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

## Senior Housing

- Shephard's Cove: 55+ housing
  - 60 – 70 units
  - single, duplex and multiple units
  - community building
  - market rate
- Meeting House Village
  - North and south campuses
  - Elderly housing
  - Affordable for retirees
  - Run by a church
- [Kittery Estates \(market rate\)](#)
- [Foxwell \(subsidized\)](#)
- Senior activities are run at the Town's Community Center

## Healthcare Facilities:

- Portsmouth Regional Hospital
- York [Hospital](#) and Walk-in Clinic
- [York Rehabilitation Facility](#)
- Durgin Pines: assisted living/rehab facility

## TOWN FACILITIES

### Schools: currently have excess capacity

- [Horace Mitchell Elementary School](#) is in Kittery Point – not many children walk to school
- [Shapleigh Middle School](#), Kittery, has walking track (only one at a school)
- [R.W. Traip Academy](#): public high school, proficiency-based learning, no athletic facilities

### Community/Senior Center

- Former middle school
- 3 years old
- Community events, concerts, etc.

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## **Library**

- Currently located in Foreside in two small buildings
- Would like to build larger building next to Community Center

## **Town Hall**

**DPW:** behind Town Hall

## **2 Fire Stations**

- Main Station: Rt. 1 By-Pass
- Smaller one on Kittery Point
- On-call fire staff, good response time

## **Sewage Treatment Plant**

- Enterprise fund/user fees

## **Kittery Water District**

- Not part of Town
- User fees

**Memorial Field:** football

## **COMMERCIAL ZONES**

C-2 Zone: Harold Bell Highway

Rt. 1

C-1 Memorial Circle

## **OTHER**

- No big box over 100,000 SF allowed
- Other end of Rt. 1: commercial; sidewalks were installed 10 years ago
- Re-doing Memorial Circle with ped/bike connections to outlet area
- **Dineen Coach:** bus company

## Notes on some Previous Relevant Documents

- The Shore and Harbor Plan has not been adopted by the Planning Board. The priorities listed do not necessarily represent the public's input.
- Recently completed Athletic Fields Plan

## Public Meeting Locations and capacity

- Shapleigh School: approximately 100 – 150 attended
- R.W. Traip Auditorium, High School : over 100 attended
- Community Center: 75 person capacity

## Gathering in Kittery

- Foreside
- Resource Recovery Center
- Civic organizations
- Churches
- Schools
- sports
- Grumpy Old Men's Club, Sun. AM, Frisbee's Market
- Outlet Association

## Communication in Kittery

- Cable TV: Channel 22
- Our Town
- No local newspaper
- Seacoast on-line
- Portsmouth Herald
- Public Radio

## IMPORTANT DATES

**March:** get recommendation from Town Council to be on the ballot

**June:** vote in Town Meeting; hearing before the Council

**Planning Board:** meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday each month

*"What makes Kittery, Kittery, are the personal connections"*